

## REMARKS

Claims 64, 66 to 72 and 77 to 79 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. The rejections are respectfully traversed and the Examiner is requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in light of the following comments.

In the Office Action, clarification of three points was requested. In point 1), clarification was requested as to “where or which portion is the midcourse portion of the negative loading passage?” Applicants wish to point out that the Office Action seems to be focusing on a midcourse portion of the negative pressure loading passage itself rather than the midcourse portion as claimed. In this regard, Claim 64 calls for the disruption to be at a midcourse portion of the negative-pressure loading passage “between the ink tank and the gas-liquid separating means.” That is, the disruption of the negative-pressure loading passage is at a location where the surface of the ink tank 501 and a sealing surface of the gas-liquid separating means 532B meet. Since the gas-liquid separating means is located in the passage so that it contacts the surface of the ink tank at the port 501B, then the claimed midcourse portion “between the ink tank and the gas-liquid separating means” is where the surfaces between these two elements meet (i.e., between the surface of the ink tank and the gas-liquid separating means). Therefore, Applicants believe the claimed midcourse portion is clear both on its face and when read in light of the specification. Accordingly, withdrawal of this basis for the § 112 rejection is respectfully requested.

With regard to point 2), clarification was requested as to the meaning of “disrupting a midcourse portion of the negative-pressure loading passage ....” In response, Applicants wish to point out that the disrupting means can be seen to comprise the arm member 531, and the sealing surface 532B thereof. Thus, as seen in Figure 45, the

disrupting means' function is to disrupt the negative pressure applied via the passage 512 between the surface of the ink tank 501 and the sealing surface of the gas-liquid separating means 505 by moving the ink tank such that the arm member 531, and consequently, the sealing surface 532B, covers the port 501B so that the negative pressure applied to the ink tank via the path 512 is disrupted. Therefore, Applicants believe that the claimed disrupting means is also clear both on its face and when read in light of the specification. Accordingly, withdrawal of this basis for the § 112 rejection is respectfully requested.

Finally, with regard to point 3), clarification was requested as to why the "disrupting means" is not called a "sealing member" instead. Applicants note that they may be their own lexicographer and therefore, have chosen to utilize the claimed "disrupting means" terminology. Since the disrupting means is clearly defined in the specification, Applicants see no reason to change the terminology and have chosen not to do so in this Amendment. Accordingly, withdrawal of this basis for the § 112, rejection is respectfully requested.

No other matters having been raised, in view of the foregoing remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa,  
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our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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